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**PH.D. Hayat Al-Rashidi**

# The Seferberlik of the Kurdish issue

It is Seferberlik in different time and place, but the tragedy of the peoples remains the same.

Since the early era of the Kurds, planning to exterminate them was close. History recorded four massacres and they were kept secret with the participation of the Safavids and the Ottomans, including (the massacre of Al-Mahmudi, Al-Baradosti, Al-Mukri, and Al-Bana Bay).

The Kurdish fighters played an influential and important role for their geographical and military experience in most of the battles fought by the Ottoman army in the eastern parts of the country and others, such as the control of Mardin city in 1515 AD, and the Battle of Koçhisar in 922 AH / 1516 AD. After that, many cities and castles fell under the control of the Ottoman Kurdish alliance, which the Kurds considered to be within the scope of the expansion of Islam, so Arghani, Sinjar, Tal Afar, Jermuk, Sefer Bey, Birecik, as well as Mosul and Erbil, which became under Ottoman influence.

With these Kurdish participations and efforts, a different stage began in the history of Ottoman-Kurdish relations, and its quality may become clearer after the Crimean War (Turkish: Kırım Savaşı) of 1270 AH / 1853 AD against Russia. We can also add the Ottoman-Russian war that broke out in 1294 AH / 1878-1877 AD, then the First World War 1333 AH / 1914 AD, until the Turkish War of Independence broke out against the Ottomans themselves in 1340-1337 AH / 1922-1919 AD.

The Kurdish Emirates, when they were free, participated in these wars out of religious motivation, believing in the necessity of jihad against the infidels. The Kurdish princes and clerics considered it necessary to take sides with the Muslim Ottoman Empire in that war, as well as to abide by the covenants and pacts concluded with the Ottoman Empire.

The relations between the two parties fluctuated between religious loyalty, given that the Ottoman sultans were Muslim leaders, and national affiliation, which the Kurds expressed in movements against the domination of the Ottoman Empire. Their motives were not national, but an attempt to preserve an entity of their own, mostly for economic reasons and to get rid of the exorbitant taxes imposed by the Ottoman authorities on them. This is what made those peoples who fell under the control of the Ottoman Turks groan under massacres and dispersal.

These movements did not achieve their goals due to two main factors, first: they were met with severe violence, and the second: because of the dispersal of these movements and their lack of unification. This was to the point that an uprising occurred during the Battle of Crimea, in which some Kurdish parties tried to cooperate with the Russians, but the Russian side failed to offer the Kurds a promise of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

The growth of the Turkish nationalist trend became clear after the collapse of Sultan Abdul Hamid's rule, the rise of the Union and Progress group, and their attempts to provoke non-Turkish nationalities. That era witnessed the establishment of a number of Kurdish associations of a national nature, with the aim of achieving the goals of the Kurdish people. Their fight against the British occupation was motivated by the religious bond that the Kurds were keen to perpetuate by being part of the Ottoman Empire.

There are a number of historical factors that can help explain the unique alignment of the Kurds towards the Turkish nation, most of them related to the Ottoman past. In the last days of the Ottoman Empire, the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Turkish nationalism prevailed. The Turkish nationalist extremism increased after the failure of the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish nationalism became the dominant force in the new Turkish Republic.

The Republic of Turkey was established on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire in 1342 AH / 1923 AD, after its defeat in the First World War 1336-1333 AH / 1918-1914 AD and being occupied by the countries that won the war. After that, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated from within and collapsed, and the Islamic world and most of the Arab countries fell under the scourge and impact of war, the era of colonialism, and later became known as the Turkish Republic.

Officials in the League of Nations estimated the number of Kurds in 1344 AH / 1925 AD, throughout the region, at three million people, half of whom live in Turkey.

Tracing the Kurdish issue in the republican era indicates that the Kurdish movements and their national demands were vigorously fought by the Turkish army, especially since it is one of the most important policies of the state to dissolve the Kurdish demographic structure and integrate their identity.

The lack of recognition of the existence of an issue that belongs to the Kurdish people led to the succession of disasters suffered by the displaced Kurdish people, whose diaspora between Arab and non-Arab countries tells their reality of tragedies and the depletion of their power, and that the Turkish state exploited these events to continue the political and economic use of force at the expense of the Kurdish issue.

## Summary of these relations

The Ottomans did not save the Kurds from the massacres in which they were a party. The demographics of the Kurdish people have changed and become areas of ethnic and sectarian tension. The Turkification of Kurdish cities and the fight against speaking their language continued.